

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM
On Wed., March 18, 2026
Department of Natural Resources
C-4 Conference Room
Department of Natural Resources
Tawes State Office Building**

Meeting Agenda:

Approval for March 18, 2026, Meeting Agenda

Approval of February 18, 2026, Meeting Minutes

2026-2028 Hunting Regulation Proposals Update – Commission’s Vote Required (Associate Director Brian Eyler and Staff)

Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee Report (Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack)

Migratory Game Bird Regulation Proposals Update – Commission’s Vote Required (Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack)

2026 Legislative Session Update (Associate Director Brian Eyler)

Call for Conservationist, Employee, and Farmer of the Year Nominations (Group Discussion)

Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation (R3) Program Update (Associate Director Chris Markin)

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (Tyler Hough)

Natural Resources Police Update (Lieutenant Brian Miller or Lieutenant Bill Davis)

Old Business:

- **Non-Lead Hunting Ammunition – (Group Discussion)**
- **Reptile and Amphibian Regulation Concepts – (Group Discussion)**

New Business:

Public Comment:

Adjourn

NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.

**The Proposed Schedule for the 2026 Meetings
Of the Wildlife Advisory Commission is as follows:**

January 21st	Google Meet
February 18th	Google Meet
March 18th	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
April 15th	Google Meet
May 20th	No Meeting
June 17th	Google Meet
July 15th	No Meeting
August 19th	Google Meet
September 15th?	Field Trip (Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge)
October 21st	Google Meet
November 18th	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
December 16th	No Meeting

***PLEASE NOTE THAT MEETING DATES ARE HELD
ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH***

Note: Unless notified otherwise, all meetings will be held via Google Meet. When meeting in person, they will be held in the C-4 Conference Room of the Department of Natural Resources—Tawes State Office Building beginning at 10:30 a.m. Parking is available at the Navy Stadium Parking Lot.

NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

MARCH 18, 2026

Chair Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. This meeting was held by teleconference and in-person. Chair Wagner requested a roll call from individuals on by teleconference. Unfortunately, due to Google Meet's anonymous caller system, it was impossible to identify every participant.

Approval of March 18, 2026, Meeting Agenda

- Motion:
 1. Vice Chair Schroyer moved to accept the agenda for the March 18, 2026, Wildlife Advisory Commission meeting.
 2. Commissioner Herrera seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval of February 18, 2026, Meeting Minutes

- Chair Wagner addressed the approval of the meeting minutes and emphasized that corrections, additions, or deletions must be made during the Commission meeting to ensure an accurate public record by the Commission, not by the public.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Parks moved to approve the February 18, 2026, meeting minutes.
 2. Commissioner Herrera seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

2026-2028 Hunting Regulation Concepts – Associate Director Brian Eyler

- Associate Director Brian Eyler delivered the 2026-2028 Hunting Regulation Proposals PowerPoint Presentation. [ATTACHMENT A]
- The process for the 2026-2028 hunting regulations was summarized, noting that development began in August and involved presenting concepts to stakeholders before opening for public comment in February.
- The Commission was presented with the final draft of the proposals, which would then be published in the Maryland Register for formal adoption, pending the Commission's vote.
- The discussion also covered key public comments received, including concerns about antler and antlerless deer bag limits, a desire for a one-buck-bag limit, increasing Sunday hunting, prohibiting the sale of antler sheds, and differing opinions on the non-resident deer stamp.
- River Otter Bag Limit Alignment Proposal – The first regulation proposal discussed was for river otters, intended to align the bag limit in non-coastal zones for consistency and ease of compliance. The recommendation was to adopt the proposal as written, given very few, if any, public comments.
- Motion:
 1. Vice Chair Schroyer moved to adopt the proposal to align the river otter bag limit.
 2. Commissioner Parks seconded.
 3. Motion passed with one opposition.
- Fisher and Long-tailed Weasel Bag Limits Proposal – The second proposal sought to increase the fisher bag limit from two to four and make the long-tailed weasel bag limit mirror that of the fisher. There were a limited number of comments, so the recommendation was to adopt this proposal as presented.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Parks moved to adopt the proposal for bag limits on fisher and long-tailed weasel.
 2. Commissioner Rossignuolo seconded.
 3. The motion passed with one opposition.
- Gray Fox Check-in Process Proposal – The third proposal concerned the gray fox, which was amended from its original form by removing the requirement for jawbone submission after receiving

public feedback. The final proposal mandates a check-in process for harvested gray foxes, similar to that for deer and turkey, and includes a five-year sunset provision for data collection.

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Rossignuolo moved to adopt the amended gray fox check-in proposal.
 2. Vice Chair Schroyer seconded.
 3. Motion passed with one abstention.
- Sika Deer Antler Point Restriction Proposal – The most active proposal involved instituting an antler point restriction for Sika deer, requiring stags to have at least two points on one antler for a legal harvest. There was equal opposition and support from the online comments. At the external stakeholder meeting, a few people expressed concern, and staff didn't hear any support for this proposal. Science suggests Maryland could go either way on this proposal. Staff had no recommendation on this proposal and requested feedback from the Commission.
 1. Chair Wagner discussed the matter with Commissioner Bowman and indicated that he had conducted some research. Chair Wagner recognized that this proposal was among the most controversial. Chair Wagner opened the floor for discussion before voting.
 2. Chair Wagner read Commissioner Bowman's concerns about the Sika deer proposal from an email he sent to the Commission and staff. **[ATTACHMENT B]**
 3. Chair Wagner explained to those who did not know the difference between antlered white-tailed deer and antlered Sika deer. An antlered Sika deer is a deer with at least one antler visible above the hairline, whereas a white-tailed deer is defined as a deer with one antler three or more inches long, measuring from the top of the skull as the deer is in life.
 4. Chair Wagner mentioned that many people who hunt Sika deer find it difficult to distinguish antlered Sika from a stag. Therefore, there may be an unintentional violation of the law. Changing the definition is not being considered at this time, but it might be something to review later. He also agreed with Commissioner Bowman that it is probably not a good idea to make that change at this time, until the Department clarifies the manual's definition of what constitutes a stag or antlered deer.
 5. Commissioner Smith agreed that the restriction could cause anxiety for hunters deciding whether to shoot an antlered Sika deer.
 6. Commissioner Herrera agreed that he does not want the antler restriction.
 7. Commissioner Rasche indicated that the Sika deer antler point restriction will not help, as we need to keep harvesting as many Sika deer as possible.
- Q&A Section
 1. Commissioner Herrera noted that Sika deer is not a native species. Commissioner Herrera asked whether, for the Wildlife Advisory Commission, our intention or goal is more to support the novel hunting opportunity or to help protect native species. Commissioner Herrera asked whether the Wildlife Advisory Commission is aiming to create more hunting opportunities for Sika deer or to remove them to increase opportunities for native wildlife hunting.
 - a. Chair Wagner recognized that Commissioner Herrera asked a good question. Chair Wagner mentioned that Sika deer hunting is very popular. Maryland has the only hunttable wild population in the United States. There is a financial impact because individuals who want to hunt must obtain a Sika deer stamp, and that brings money to the State. So, it's a very complicated issue. Chair Wagner noted that he does not have an answer for Commissioner Herrera's question. However, Commissioner Herrera's point was well taken, as others have expressed it at different times.
 - b. Associate Director Eyler informed the Commission that DNR's stance has traditionally been sustainable population in Dorchester and, to a lesser degree, in Wicomico. Staff have always made it clear that we do not want the Eastern Shore full of Sika deer. Therefore, staff have always maintained harvest to try to keep the Sika deer population in check where it is. It's worked fairly well. Staff haven't noticed a significant increase in Sika deer. Staff have to look at the financial end of things, too, as Chair Wagner pointed out. Sika deer are okay where there are, but the staff is not trying to propagate them.

- c. Commissioner Herrera replied that this information was helpful.
 - d. Commissioner Rasche informed the Commission that the Farm Bureau considers Sika deer an invasive species and a threat to crops in those areas, so the more taken out, the better. Sika deer will always be there. Hunting pressure on Sika deer will continue, and Sika deer will provide hunting opportunities; people will buy hunting licenses and stamps to hunt them.
2. Commissioner Rossignuolo asked whether Sika deer are considered naturalized, because sometimes with invasive species, there's a distinction between those that are detrimental and those that are similar to a subcategory.
 - a. WHS does not have a classification of naturalized but views sika deer as an established non-native species that, to date, has not been destructive like other invasive species, including nutria.
- Motion:
 1. Vice Chair Schroyer motioned to not move forward with the Sika deer antler point restriction proposal.
 2. Commissioner Smith seconded.
 3. Motion passed with one abstention.
 - Straight-Walled Cartridge Rifles for Disabled Hunters during Muzzleloader Season Proposal– The fifth proposal was to allow the use of straight-walled cartridge rifles during the muzzleloader season for hunters with a universal disability pass, provided that the hunters are hunting from a vehicle. The comments were mainly in support. Therefore, the recommendation was to move this one forward.
 - Motion:
 1. Commissioner Rasche moved to adopt straight-walled cartridge rifles for disabled hunters during the muzzleloader season, with a universal disability pass, for hunting from a vehicle.
 2. Commissioner Parks seconded.
 3. Motion passed with one abstention.
 - Energy Requirements for Deer and Black Bear Rifles – The sixth proposal aimed to modify the energy requirements for rifles used to hunt deer and black bear, removing the 1,200 foot-pound muzzle energy requirement for centerfire rifles that are 30 caliber, 7.62 millimeter, or larger. Rifles smaller than 30 caliber would still need to meet the 1,200-foot-pound requirement, which was supported by the limited comments received.
 - Motion:
 1. Vice Chair Schroyer moved to adopt the change to energy requirements for rifles used to hunt deer and black bear.
 2. Commissioner Rossignuolo seconded.
 3. Motion passed with one abstention.
 - Black Bear Lottery Preference Points – The seventh proposal is a policy rather than a regulatory one, ensuring that participants do not lose their black bear lottery preference points if they forget to enter the lottery for a given year. This proposal received only supportive comments and was recommended for adoption.
 - Motion:
 1. Commissioner Rossignuolo moved to adopt an infinite grace period for black bear lottery preference points.
 2. Commissioner Parks seconded.
 3. Motion passed with one abstention.
 - Drone Use Regulation – The final proposal aimed at regulating drone use, limiting it to tracking wounded or expired animals. This proposal was highly active and received universal support, and many commenters suggested even stricter limitations. The recommendation was to be adopted.
 - Motion:
 1. Commissioner Herrera moved to adopt the drone regulation as proposed.
 2. Vice Chair Schroyer seconded.
 3. Motion passed with one abstention.
 - Education on Regulation Constraints and Public Comment:

1. Chair Wagner suggested using the public comment period as an educational opportunity to summarize common, but impossible, requests, such as extending goose hunting into February.
2. Chair Wagner indicated that the strategy aims to educate the public on the scientific and regulatory constraints, helping them understand why certain comments cannot be accommodated, thereby making them feel heard and potentially reducing repetitive, unfeasible comments in the future.
3. If there are specific questions, staff will respond to the email address. It will be difficult for staff to go back and ask those individuals for their email addresses and to respond to them.
4. Staff agreed to consider posting a collective statement or summary explaining why certain suggestions were not feasible.

Migratory Game Bird Regulation Proposals Update – Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack

- Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack presented the Proposed Migratory Game Bird Seasons for 2026-2027. [ATTACHMENT C]
- The Commission received the total Proposed 2026-2024 Migratory Game Bird Seasons in a handout. [ATTACHMENT D]
- The Proposed Migratory Game Bird Seasons underwent a public comment process and were reviewed by the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee.
- The Commission was asked to approve the proposed seasons as a package, noting that 45 comments received were on the waterfowl side of things, and about 15 or so comments fell outside the federal frameworks or state law.
- Chair Wagner agreed that the intent is to review and approve the proposed seasons as a package.
- The duck season will continue under the liberal framework, with dates and bag limits similar to the previous season, acknowledging that requests for hunting ducks later in February fall outside the federal framework, which ends on January 31.
- The proposal for the Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Goose Hunting Season is a liberal 45-day season with a two-bird daily bag limit, divided into two segments, allowing several days over the Thanksgiving Holiday. The current structure was proposed to maximize overlap between goose and duck seasons, as the federal framework does not allow goose hunting until February 5th, but using those later February days would mean sacrificing popular hunting days during the Thanksgiving Holiday.
 1. The Commission was given a detailed explanation of the historical context, including an outline of the federal framework before 2010, when there was a 45-day season in the moderate package. Around 2010, the package was expanded by 5 days, so the AP Canada goose hunting season lasted 50 days from around 2010 until 2018. With those five extra days, they expanded the framework dates from the end of January into early February to allow more days on the calendar.
 2. Since then, the AP Canada goose hunt package has become more conservative overall, reflecting lessons learned from building these hunting packages at the beginning of the modern phase of Canada goose management. Therefore, evaluating and making biology-based changes to manage the end of the season, including balancing social demand with biological factors.
- Other Migratory Game Bird Season Proposals were briefly touched on, including the resident goose seasons and the light goose hunting season.
 1. The resident goose season has bag limits set by state law that fluctuate with the AP Canada goose limit.
 2. The conservation order season for light geese is on hold, expanding the regular light goose hunting season, with final dates for part of the season determined after April population surveys.
 3. All migratory game bird season proposals, including those for rail, mourning dove, and woodcock, remain consistent.
 4. Staff recommended acceptance of the package.
- Motion:
 1. Vice Chair Schroyer moved to adopt the Proposed Migratory Game Bird Seasons for 2026-2027.
 2. Commissioner Rossignuolo seconded.

3. Motion passed with one abstention.

2026 Legislative Session Update – Associate Director Brian Eyler and Science Program Manager Gwen Brewer

Associate Director Eyler presented the 2026 Legislative Session Summary Update. [ATTACHMENT E]

- Commission members can track bills online at the Maryland General Assembly website: <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/>.
- Highlighted in yellow are the changes since the previous month's meeting.
- Most of the bills of interest have had hearings and are moving through the process.
 1. HB0175/SB0961 Income Tax Credit – Venison Donation - Alterations
 - a. HB0175 is in the opposite house and is currently capped at \$300, though one amended version may increase the cap to \$600.
 - b. It allows a \$75 credit per deer for processing, up to \$300. It was originally drafted to be unlimited, but there is another version with a \$600 cap.
 2. HB0197/SB0118 Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act.
 - a. These bills were added from the last meeting and would impose an 11% excise tax on firearm sales to fund the Community Safety Act.
 - b. Consumers would pay this tax on top of the existing sales tax, a major concern for many hunters due to the significant cost increase.
 - c. The 11% rate mirrors the current excise tax for the Pittman-Robertson Fund, and the revenue would go back to the State for community safety programs.
 3. HB0578/SB0431 Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species and Migratory Birds – Regulations, Lists, Petitions, Essential habitats, and Takings
 - a. HB0578 has been moved to the opposite chamber and aims to strengthen state statutes for threatened and endangered species in response to proposed federal changes.
 - b. Recent changes to HB0578 made it more explicit that the State protects against the take and incidental take of migratory birds unless regulations state otherwise.
 - c. The language was added to ensure that the possibility remains to issue depredation permits for black vultures if federal policies change.
 - d. HB0949/SB0613 Agriculture – Noxious Weeds – Palmer Amaranth - both the bills were withdrawn.
 4. HB1637 – State Designations – State Amphibian – Long-Tailed Salamander
 - a. HB1637 proposes designating the long-tailed salamander as the state amphibian.
 - b. The salamander proposal is partly supported by its coloring, which resembles parts of the state flag, and its representation of high-quality environmental systems.
- Discussion on Bills by Members of the Commission:
 1. Chair Wagner expressed concern that HB0197/SB0118 would impose another 11% tax on top of what is already pretty big. Chair Wagner asked the Commission to think about HB0197/SB0118.
 2. Chair Wagner sat on the Environmental and Transportation Committee hearing. Chair Wagner stated that the Natural Resources Bow Hunting, Wicomico County repeal, and the Baltimore City Natural Resources bills were all pushed through or approved through the Environmental and Transportation Committee. Assistant Secretary Peditto corrected Chair Wagner that the Environmental and Transportation Committee did not act on HB1063, Natural Resources – Hunting Management.
 3. Chair Wagner informed the Commission that HB1063, Natural Resources – Hunting Management, has received significant attention from various areas. Chair Wagner recognized that the Maryland Farm Bureau is still not on board with HB1063 due to the migratory waterfowl Sunday hunting language.
 4. Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) Director Hough confirmed that the MFB membership voted in December at their annual convention to oppose Sunday hunting for migratory birds. This policy change was initiated by a Kent County member and passed via voice vote, which is standard procedure unless the vote is unclear.

5. Chair Wagner emphasized that Delegate Boyce has stressed that HB1063 does not alter the current local hunting structure but gives the Department of Natural Resources the ability to manage Sunday hunting. Additionally, Chair Wagner explained that expanding Sunday hunting remains the most requested item by the public, as it aligns with federal goals to increase access and opportunity for youth.
 6. Chair Wagner mentioned HB1067/SB0181, Hunting – Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition – Phase-Out, another controversial topic.
 - a. The bills concerning the phase-out of lead-based ammunition have been heard in both the House and Senate committees, but no votes have been taken on either side.
 - b. MFB Director Hough informed the Commission that the MFB submitted opposition testimony on the lead-based ammunition phase-out bills.
- Q&A Section:
 1. Chair Wagner asked if this view on Sunday hunting policy was new with the MFB. Chair Wagner was under the impression, based on the former MFB representative Colby Ferguson's statement, that the MFB fully supported migratory waterfowl Sunday hunting.
 - a. MFB Director Hough clarified that it had never been an MFB policy, and if Mr. Ferguson was doing that, it was not based on MFB policy.
 2. Chair Wagner asked whether the MFB had universal support or if this was localized support against migratory waterfowl Sunday hunting. Also, Chair Wagner asked whether it is standard for MFB to conduct a voice vote on a major change like this.
 - a. MFB Director Hough replied that it was put to a vote and conducted by voice vote. There was no opposition. Everything is done by voice vote unless it is close enough for a hand vote.
 - b. At last year's convention, MFB completed 100 pieces of policy and had a day to finish them before the end. MFB tried to be efficient. Everything is a voice vote. The only time MFB will take a hand vote is when the number of votes is unclear, which is very uncommon.
 - c. There have been roughly 300 policies in Tyler Hough's three years as government relations with the MFB.
 - d. Chair Wagner reported that some MFB counties support Sunday migratory waterfowl hunting, while others do not.
 - e. Commissioner Rasche agreed with Chair Wagner that some counties support Sunday migratory waterfowl hunting, and some do not.
 3. Assistant Secretary Peditto asked how the current stance reconciles with the long-standing MFB policy that supports a uniform Sunday hunting policy.
 - a. MFB Director Hough described that the key is that it is stated uniformly on Sunday deer hunting. MFB's policy states 'deer,' and it specifically clarifies that.
 - b. Assistant Secretary Peditto understood that staff and MFB had never discussed waterfowl Sunday hunting because it was not in the equation in the past. Assistant Secretary Peditto presumed that the intent is to make it easy for farmers to understand, from farm to farm and from county to county, when property crosses county lines. It's intended to avoid the "patchwork" of regulations.
 - c. MFB Director Hough clarified that the Farm Bureau's policy on uniform Sunday hunting applies only to deer hunting to address crop damage most effectively. Therefore, MFB deer policy stems from the standpoint that MFB wants it to be less of a patchwork, and the membership desires to have as uniform and as open for deer Sunday hunting as possible.
 - d. Assistant Secretary Peditto replied to MFB Director Hough that, to the Chair's point, there is a need for people to harvest those deer. Also, as part of that recruitment, regeneration, and reactivation provision is built into the rest of that bill. If the committee carves that out, it loses the recruitment component.

Call for Conservationist, Employee, and Farmer of the Year Nominations – Group Discussion

- Chair Wagner pointed out that the Commission will rely on MFB Director Hough to gather nominations for the Farmer of the Year and forward them to Ms. Tracey Spencer.

- Chair Wagner asked if there is a Conservationist of the Year Form that the Commission could use to simplify the process.
 1. Director Stonesifer responded that we can create a Conservationist of the Year Form.
 2. Ms. Spencer has created an Employee of the Year Google Form, and we can do the same for the Conservationist of the Year.
 3. Once the Conservationist of the Year Google Form is created, staff will send it out to the Commission for input.
- Chair Wagner encouraged the Commission to participate in the nominations to make Ms. Spencer's job easier.

Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Program Update – Associate Director Chris Markin

- Director Stonesifer reported that the process of moving the Hunter Education Program to the Wildlife and Heritage Service is ongoing, and monthly reports will track events, classes, and students. Next month, the Hunter Safety Education component will be added, along with the monthly update to WAC.
- The Outreach and Community Engagement Program Update slide was presented to the Commission. [ATTACHMENT F]
- The R3 team recently hosted the National Archery in the Schools (NASP) State Tournament, with over 500 children registered for the Bullseye and 3D tournaments, despite a decline in numbers following a split with the NASP and International Bowhunting Organization (IBO). The R3 team managed the 3D tournament because the IBO is no longer involved. There was a reduction in big schools' participation due to the NASP and IBO splitting, as some schools wanted to switch to IBO, but we still have many schools. The R3 team is actively tracking youth participation by asking youth to sign up for a DNR ID number, which will later be correlated with hunting license purchases.
- R3 Staffing and Future Initiatives – The WHS actively worked to fill the remaining three of the eight allotted R3 positions despite a hiring freeze and will be onboarding a person focused on shooting sports and partnerships.
 1. Chair Wagner indicated that the Commission supports R3 efforts, as increasing recruitment and retention is critical to avoiding future fiscal shortfalls and funding essential programs.
- Q&A Section
 1. Chair Wagner asked if the Maryland Bowhunters Society supported IBO or NASP.
 - a. Maryland Bowhunter Society supported the R3 team with NASP.
 2. Commissioner Rossignuolo asked how many counties participate in NASP.
 - a. There is at least one school in every county except one, which is one county in Southern Maryland.
 - b. Some counties have more than one school participating in NASP.
 3. Commissioner Rasche asked whether the R3 team has been able to reach out to or involve any of the 4H programs in Maryland. Commissioner Rasche mentioned that he knows Carroll County has a group, and there are others.
 - a. The new position aimed to increase involvement with organizations like 4-H programs, USA Clay, target shooting, and many other programs that the State has historically not been involved in.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (MFB) - MFB Director Hough

- MFB Director Hough confirmed that the MFB will engage their wildlife committee to gather names for the Farmer of the Year nomination.
- MFB Director Hough noted that all other updates had been covered earlier.

Natural Resources Police Update (NRP) – Lieutenant Bill Davis gave an update.

- Lieutenant Davis provided statistics for February, noting 88 fisheries violations, 115 wildlife violations, 60 public lands violations, and 31 boating violations.
- NRP also responded to 6,003 calls for service and filed 243 reports.

Old Business

- Non-Lead Ammunition Discussion – no further discussion.
- Reptile and Amphibian Regulation Changes Update – Science Program Manager Brewer informed the Commission that staff are continuing to work on the herp (reptile and amphibian) regulation updates, with new draft language being developed to address crossover issues with fisheries language.

New Business –

- The State Wildlife Action Plan was posted for public comment until April 10th, following a year and a half of work, and the Commission was encouraged to review the comprehensive plan. The SWAP is crucial for securing federal funds, including State Wildlife Grants, which support projects lacking other good funding sources.
- The link to the State Wildlife Action Plan New Release is at <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2026/03/11/public-input-sought-for-marylands-ten-year-state-wildlife-action-plan/>.

Public Comment –

- There were no other public comments.
- The public may contact the Commission's Members at wac.dnr@maryland.gov.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., and will be held via Google Meet.

Attendance

Members:	D. Herrera, K. Kullberg, J. Parks, W. Rasche, K. Rossignuolo, J. Schroyer, M. Smith, and C. Wagner
Absent:	J. Bowman and E. Cohen
Guest:	T. Hough, J. Seigler, and A. Ward
Staff:	G. Brewer, B. Eyler, K. Fleming, J. Homyack, C. Markin, J. Moulis, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, K. Stonesifer, J. Tabora, and J. Trudeau

Regulation Proposals


2026-27 and 2027-28 Hunting Seasons



Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Wildlife and Heritage Service

Regulatory Process

- ✓ The Game Program meets and develops Management Concepts.
 - August 21, 2025
- ✓ Presents Management Concepts to Wildlife Advisory Committee.
 - October 15, 2025
- ✓ Presents Concepts to a meeting of Internal Stakeholders.
 - December 10, 2025
- ✓ Presents Concepts to a meeting of External Stakeholders.
 - January 14, 2026
- ✓ Concepts are refined further and developed into Proposals and are placed online for public comment.
 - February 2026
-  ✓ Comment period closes and Proposals are finalized and presented to the Wildlife Advisory Commission for a final vote.
 - March 18, 2026
- ✓ Final Proposals are forwarded to the Maryland Register for additional comment and regulations become final.

**REVIEW INPUT AND ADD/DROP/MODIFY
AT EVERY STEP**

Public Comments

- 177 comments received
- Many comments not directly related to the regulation proposals
 - Antlered and antlerless deer bag limits – one buck
 - Sunday hunting
 - Prohibition of cell cameras on public lands
 - Turkey seasons and bag limits
 - Prohibition of deer drives on public lands
 - License fees and structures

River Otter

Regulation Proposal

Align the otter bag limit in both non-coastal zones. The bag limit would be two otters per day (total of two per season) for Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Montgomery, and Washington counties combined.

Rationale/Goal: Aligning the bag limits in the non-coastal zones would simplify bag limit restrictions for trappers and only increase the daily and season bag limit in Allegany and Garrett counties by one. Current trapping participation levels make population harm a non-concern.

Recommendation: Adopt as proposed

Fisher and Long-tailed weasel



Regulation Proposal

Align the fisher and long-tailed weasel bag limits and season dates. The bag limit would increase from two fishers to four fishers per season and the season would run from November 1st - February 1st. The long-tailed weasel season and bag limit would mirror fisher.

Rationale/Goal: Long-tailed weasel trapping season currently mirrors that of coyote, a species they share little in common with. Long-tailed weasel are more similar to fisher and trapping methods for the two species are more similar. Additionally, there is currently no bag limit on long-tailed weasel, despite regional concern for the species. Establishing a bag limit would ensure the protection of the species.

Research has shown that the fisher population in western Maryland is robust enough to sustain additional harvest. Current fisher trapping participation is relatively low. Increased bag limits may increase participation.

Recommendation: Adopt as proposed

Gray Fox

Regulation Proposal

Create an electronic check-in process for gray fox similar to current requirements for deer and turkeys. All trappers and hunters who harvest a gray fox between November 1st and February 28th would be required to check in their harvest electronically using the current MD Outdoors system. This regulatory change would have a 5-year sunset provision.

Rationale/Goal: Gray fox are suspected to be in decline across their range. Electronic check-in of harvested animals would help to supplement current harvest monitoring mechanisms. Other states have implemented an electronic check-in process for gray fox for similar reasons.

Recommendation: Adopt as proposed

Sika Deer

Regulation Proposal

Institute an antler point restriction (APR) for sika deer requiring stags to have at least two points on one antler to be legal for harvest. Hunters would be allowed to harvest one antlered sika deer within the yearly bag limit that does not meet that requirement. Stags could be taken in any order.

Rationale/Goal: Further align sika deer management with the same quality deer management principles used to manage white-tailed deer. The APR would promote the harvest of mature sika deer, improving the age structure of the population. Additionally, an APR would promote an increased antlerless harvest, improving overall herd management.

Recommendation: No recommendation

Deer

Regulation Proposal

Allow the use of straight-walled cartridge rifles during the muzzleloader seasons for those hunters with a Universal Disability Pass that are hunting from a vehicle.

Rationale/Goal: Improve safety and hunting opportunities for disabled hunters.

Recommendation: Adopt as proposed

Deer & Black Bear



Regulation Proposal

Modify the current energy requirements for rifles allowed for hunting deer and black bear. Any centerfire or rimfire rifle .30 caliber (7.62mm) or larger would be legal for hunting these species with no minimum muzzle energy requirement. Rifles smaller than .30 caliber (7.62mm) used for black bear and deer would still be required to generate 1,200 foot pounds of muzzle energy.

Rationale/Goal: The current regulation excludes many popular pistol rounds used in rifles that are capable of ethically harvesting big game. This change would legalize and expand the use of popular modern hunting rifles that are commonly used in other states that do not currently meet the muzzle energy requirement. Additionally, this change increases the rifle options for youth, senior, and disabled hunters who may be restricted due to recoil.

Recommendation: Adopt as proposed

Black Bear

Management Proposal (policy change)

Adopt an infinite grace period for black bear lottery preference points.

Rationale/Goal: Common request from hunters. Currently, if a hunter misses a single year, they lose all of their preference points. This has caused frustration amongst resident and non-resident hunters. Implementing a grace period will improve hunter retention, hunter relations, and reduce confusion surrounding the lottery process.

Note: This is a policy change, but public comment is requested.

Recommendation: Adopt as proposed

Drones

Regulation Proposal

Establish regulations for the approved use of small unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) while hunting. Regulations would prohibit the use of a drone to locate, drive, or herd wildlife for the purpose of hunting, trapping, or killing EXCEPT they could be used to aid in the recovery of a wounded or expired animal. Drone operators would be required to notify Natural Resources Police before and after using a drone to search for a wounded or expired animal.

Rationale/Goal: Currently, there are no restrictions for drone use. This regulation would promote fair chase hunting and align more closely with other states.

Recommendation: Adopt as proposed

Questions / Comments



Tracey Spencer <tracey.spencer@maryland.gov>

RE: March 18, 2026 WAC Meeting Agenda, Parking Arrangements, and Meeting Minutes Packet

1 message

Bowman, Jacob [REDACTED] Tue, Mar 17, 2026 at 5:50 PM
 To: Tracey Spencer <tracey.spencer@maryland.gov>, "Paul A. Peditto" <paul.peditto@maryland.gov>, Brian Eyler Eyler -Dnr- <brian.eyler@maryland.gov>, Karina Stonesifer <karina.stonesifer@maryland.gov>, "Kaitlin L. Rossignuolo" [REDACTED], "Carl F. Wagner" [REDACTED], Michael [REDACTED], "William Richard Rasche Jr." [REDACTED], Kathryn Kullberg [REDACTED], "Dr. Daniel Joseph Herrera" [REDACTED], "Dr. Emily Beth Cohen" [REDACTED], "J. Jeremy Parks" [REDACTED], "Joe L. Schroyer" [REDACTED]
 Cc: Bill Davis -DNR- <bill.davis1@maryland.gov>, Brian Miller -DNR- <brianc.miller@maryland.gov>, Kristen Fleming -DNR- <kristen.fleming@maryland.gov>, "Shawn A. Garren -DNR-" <shawna.garren@maryland.gov>, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Josh Homyack <josh.homyack@maryland.gov>, Harold Dixon -DNR- <harold.dixon@maryland.gov>, Robert Karge -DNR- <robert.karge@maryland.gov>, "Jonathan K. Trudeau -DNR-" <jonathank.trudeau@maryland.gov>, "Felker, Christy" <christy.felker@maryland.gov>, "Kayla M. Harvey -DNR-" <kaylam.harvey@maryland.gov>, "Brewer, Gwenda L." <gwenda.brewer@maryland.gov>, Bob Long -DNR- <Bob.Long@maryland.gov>, Candice Collison <candice.collison@maryland.gov>, Joshua Tabora -DNR- <joshua.tabora@maryland.gov>, Hannah Devine -DNR- <hannah.devine1@maryland.gov>, "Schenck, Greg" <greg.schenck@maryland.gov>, "Bennett, Jim" <jim.bennett@maryland.gov>, Carson Coriell -DNR- <carson.coriell@maryland.gov>, Ivonne Montanez -DNR- <ivonne.montanez1@maryland.gov>, Tina Jarvis -DNR- <tina.jarvis@maryland.gov>, Lynn Davidson <lynn.davidson@maryland.gov>, Katelyn Horn -DNR- <katelyn.horn@maryland.gov>, Kevin Lamp -DNR- <kevin.lamp1@maryland.gov>, "Brown, Rande" <rande.brown@maryland.gov>, John Moulis -DNR- <john.moulis@maryland.gov>, Christopher A Markin -DNR- <Christopher.Markin@maryland.gov>, "McCarthy, Katharine" <katharine.mccarthy@maryland.gov>, Beth Schlimm -DNR- <beth.schlimm1@maryland.gov>

All,

I had hoped to remotely join the meeting tomorrow, but it looks like I will be unable to attend. I noted on the agenda that hunting regulation proposals are up for a vote. Although I support most of the proposals, I do have concerns about one after seeing the public comments.

I am concerned about the sika proposal. Antler point restrictions for sika are not likely to impact management of the population because very few hunters harvest a second deer. I am concerned about the impact on harvesting antlerless sika hinds. I think hunters may hesitate to harvest sika for fear of shooting one with antlers just above the hairline, which would prevent them from harvesting a stag of their choice.

I do not want to limit the harvest of hinds at a time of an expanding sika range and increasing deer damage complaints. I think antler point restrictions should be paired with changing the legal definition of a legal stag from "an antlered sika deer is a deer with at least one antler visible above the hairline" to "an antlered sika deer is a deer with one antler three or more inches long, measuring from the top of the skull as the deer is in life". This definition would mirror the definition for white-tailed deer.

I apologize again for not being at the meeting.

Jake

Proposed Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons for 2026-27



Annual Regulatory Process for Migratory Game Birds



- **2026-2027 seasons**
 - Atlantic Flyway Council, September 8-12, 2025.
 - FWS Regulations Committee, December 2025.
 - Proposed federal frameworks, early 2026.
 - MGBAC early January, WAC reviews late January.
 - Maryland public comment period (mid February).
 - WAC votes on proposed seasons in late March.
 - Final season selections due to FWS in late April.

Regular Duck Hunting Season



Federal Framework:

60-day season between Saturday nearest Sept. 24 and January 31 with a daily bag limit of 6 ducks (species restrictions).

Eastern Duck Zone	Western Duck Zone
Oct. 10, 2026 – Oct. 17, 2026 Nov. 14, 2026 – Nov. 27, 2026 Dec. 15, 2026 – Jan. 30, 2027	Oct. 3, 2026 – Oct. 17, 2026 Nov. 21, 2026 – Nov. 27, 2026 Dec. 15, 2026 – Jan. 30, 2027

Daily Bag Limit:

6 per day (including mergansers) but no more than 4 sea ducks (3 long-tailed ducks, 3 scoters, 3 eiders), 4 mallards (2 hens), 3 wood ducks, 3 pintails, 2 redheads, 1 scaup*, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks (during black duck season), 1 mottled duck, and 1 fulvous tree duck.

- *Scaup hybrid season: Daily bag limit is 1 except between Jan.9, 2027 and Jan. 30, 2027 when 2 scaup per day may be harvested.*

Regular Duck Hunting Season



Recommend accepting regular duck seasons as proposed.

- Most public comment was favorable or outside the boundaries allowed by the federal frameworks (ex. hunting ducks in February).

Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Goose Hunting Season



Federal Framework

A 45-day season may be held between Nov. 15 and Feb. 5 with a 2 bird daily bag limit. The season may be divided into no more than 2 segments.

Proposed Season and Bag Limit:

Nov. 24, 2026 – Nov. 27, 2026

Dec. 15, 2026 – Jan. 30, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 2 per day

Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Goose Hunting Season



Recommend accepting the AP Canada goose seasons as proposed.

- Most public comment asked for more opportunity (longer seasons and higher bag limits). These requests fall outside the Federal Frameworks.
- A few “asks” for moving days earlier or later in the season (Thanksgiving, beginning of February).
- A few “asks” to move zone boundaries.

AF Resident Population Canada Goose Hunting Season



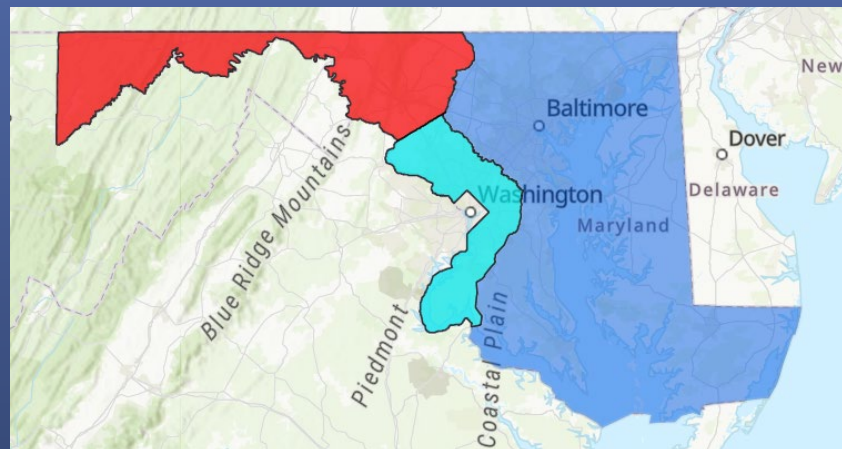
Federal Framework:

80-day season between Nov. 15 and Mar. 10

Daily Bag Limit: 5 per day

Late Southern Maryland Goose Zone

Proposed Season Dates	Daily Bag Limit
Nov. 21, 2026 - Nov. 23, 2026	5 per day
Nov. 24, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026	2 per day
Dec. 15, 2026 – Jan. 30, 2027	2 per day
Feb. 1, 2027 – Mar. 10, 2027	5 per day



AF Resident Population Canada Goose Hunting Season



Federal Framework:

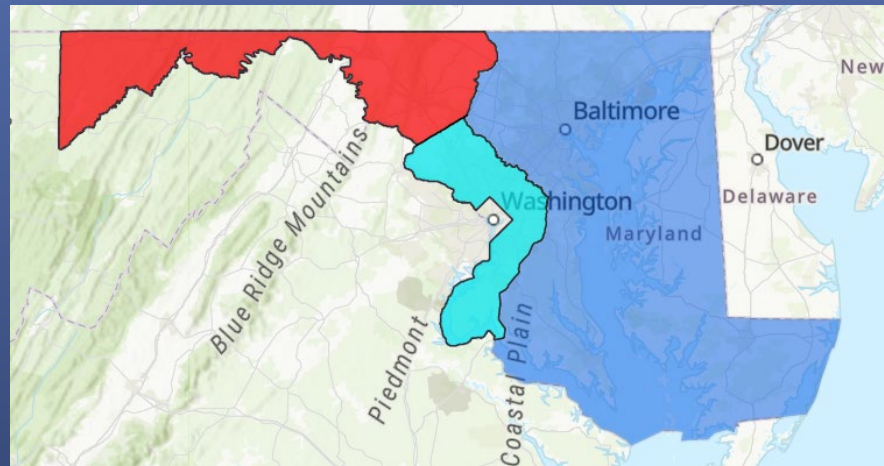
80-day season between Nov. 15 and Mar. 10

Daily Bag Limit: 5 per day

Late Western Maryland Goose Zone

Proposed Season Dates: Nov. 21, 2026 – Nov. 27, 2026
Dec. 15, 2026 – Mar. 10, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 5 per day



AF Resident Population Canada Goose Hunting Season (AFRP Zone)



Recommend accepting the Resident Canada Goose Seasons as proposed

- There was little public comment on this season.

Light Goose Hunting Season



Federal Framework:

107-day season between Oct. 1 and Mar. 10 with a 25-bird daily bag limit and no possession limit.

Proposed Season:

Nov. 5, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026

Nov. 30, 2026 - Mar. 10, 2027*

Daily Bag Limit: 25 per day
No Possession Limit

*The following special methods may be used from February 8, 2027 – March 10, 2027: (1) Hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shotshells; and (2) Hunters may use electronic calls with recordings of light geese.

Light Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season



Federal Framework:

The Conservation Order allows extended shooting hours for light geese (one-half hour after sunset) and imposes no daily bag limits for light geese. The CO may only open when all waterfowl (including light goose) and crane hunting seasons (excluding falconry) are closed.

Proposed Season:

TBD – March 11, 2027 - April 10, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: No bag limit
No possession limit

Light Goose Hunting Season



Recommend accepting the Light Goose Season as proposed.

- There was little public comment on this season.
- One request to begin using special methods sooner.

Questions?



PROPOSED MARYLAND MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR THE 2026-27 HUNTING SEASON

SPECIAL EARLY RESIDENT POPULATION CANADA GEESE

Federal framework: A 15-day special season may be held between September 1 – 15 in the Eastern zone and a 25-day season between September 1 - 25 in the Western zone.

Proposed Season Dates

Eastern Zone Sept. 1, 2026 - Sept 15, 2026

Western Zone Sept. 1, 2026 - Sept 25, 2026

Daily Bag Limit: 8 in both zones. Possession limit is 3 times the daily limit.

Eastern Hunt Zone: Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; and that part of Anne Arundel County east of Interstate 895, Interstate 97 and Route 3; that part of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County east of 301 to the Virginia line.

Western Hunt Zone: Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Montgomery and Washington Counties; and that part of Anne Arundel County west of Interstate 895, Interstate 97 and Route 3; that part of Prince George's County west of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County west of 301 to the Virginia line.

Shotguns capable of holding more than 3 shells may be used. Shooting hours in both zones are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON

Federal framework: States may select a 9-day season to be held between September 1 and 30. Teal season may not run concurrently with other seasons (resident Canada goose) that allow special considerations such as modified shooting hours or unplugged guns.

Proposed Season Dates Sept. 17, 2026 - Sept. 26, 2026

Daily Bag Limit: 6 blue-winged or green-winged teal, singly or in aggregate. The possession limit is 3 times the daily bag limit.

September Teal Hunt Zone: Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; that part of Anne Arundel County east of Interstate 895, Interstate 97, Route 3; that part of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County east of 301 to the Virginia line. Shooting hours for teal during this season are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

YOUTH, VETERAN, AND MILITARY WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS

Federal Framework: States may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as “Youth, Veteran, and Military Waterfowl Hunting Days,” in addition to their regular duck seasons. The days must be held outside any regular duck season on a weekend, holiday or other non-school day when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck season framework, within any split of a regular duck season or within any other open season on migratory bird. Military veterans (as defined in Section 101 of title 38, United States Code) of any age and members of the armed forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on Active duty (other than for training) can participate in these two hunt days.

Proposed Season Dates: Nov. 7, 2026, and Feb. 6, 2027

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: The daily bag limit of ducks (including mergansers) is 6. The 6-duck limit shall consist of no more than 4 sea ducks (no more than 3 long-tailed ducks, 3 scoters or 3 eiders), 4 mallards (no more than 2 hen mallards), 3 wood ducks, 2 scaup, 3 pintails, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks, 1 fulvous tree duck and 1 mottled duck. All other species of ducks (except harlequin duck) may be taken up to the 6-duck limit. In addition, youth hunters may take 2 Canada geese in the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone or 5 Canada Geese in the Late Resident Canada Goose Hunt Zone, 1 brant, 25 light geese and 15 coots. No open season for harlequin ducks and swans.

Any licensed hunter 16 years old or younger may participate during these one-day hunts. Youth of this age who are exempt from the Maryland hunting license requirements may also participate. Youth waterfowl hunters must possess a receipt showing they purchased a \$9 Maryland Migratory Game Bird Hunting Stamp. A Federal Migratory Hunting and Conservation Stamp is required of youth hunters who are 16 years old. Youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult at least 21 years old that holds a valid Maryland hunting license or is exempt from the hunting license requirements. The accompanying adult may call waterfowl, assist with decoys, and retrieve downed birds but may not possess a hunting weapon.

ATLANTIC POPULATION (AP) CANADA GEESE

Federal Framework: AP Zone: A 45-day season may be held between November 15 and February 5, with a 2-bird daily bag limit. These seasons also include white-fronted geese. Unless specified otherwise, seasons may be split into two segments.

Proposed Season Dates: Nov. 24, 2026 – Nov. 27, 2026
Dec. 15, 2026 – Jan. 30, 2027

Bag Limit: 2 per day

AP Zone: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, St. Mary’s, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97 and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; and that portion of Prince George’s County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line.

AF RESIDENT POPULATION CANADA GEESE

Federal Framework: An 80-day season may be held between November 15 and March 10, with a 5-bird daily bag limit. The season may be split into 3 segments.

Late Southern Maryland Resident Canada Goose Zone

Proposed Season Dates	Daily Bag Limit
Nov. 21, 2026 - Nov. 23, 2026	5 per day*
Nov. 24, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026	2 per day*
Dec. 15, 2026 – Jan. 30, 2027	2 per day*
Feb. 1, 2027 – Mar. 10, 2027	5 per day*

Zone Boundaries includes these counties: Montgomery; and that portion of Prince George’s County west of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County west of Route 301 to the Virginia line.

*Includes Canada geese, cackling geese and white-fronted geese singly or in aggregate.

Late Western Maryland Resident Canada Goose Zone

Proposed Season Dates: Nov. 21, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026
 Dec. 15, 2026 - Mar. 10, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 5 per day*

Zone Boundaries includes these counties: Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties; and that portion of Carroll County west of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97 and west of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line.

ATLANTIC BRANT

Federal Framework: States may select a 30-day season between the Saturday nearest September 24 and January 31, with a 1-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.

Proposed Season Dates: Dec. 28, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 1 per day

LIGHT GEESE This section edited to correct errors 2/16/2027

Federal Framework: *States may select a 107-day season between October 1 and March 10, with a 25-bird daily bag limit and no possession limit. States may split their seasons into three segments.*

Proposed Season Dates: Nov. 5, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026 Statewide
Nov. 30, 2026 – Feb. 6, 2027 Statewide
Feb. 8, 2027 – March 10, 2027 *Eastern Zone only
**Special methods authorized

Daily Bag Limit: 25 per day No possession limit.
Includes greater and lesser snow geese and Ross's geese singly or in aggregate.

* Eastern Zone Hunt Area: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; that portion of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line. The Special Sea Duck Zone is excluded from this hunt area.

**The following special methods may be used from February 8, 2027 – March 10, 2027: (1) Hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shotshells; and (2) Hunters may use electronic calls with recordings of light geese.

LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER

Federal Framework: *The conservation order allows new methods of taking light geese, allows shooting hours for light geese to end one-half hour after sunset and imposes no daily bag limits for light geese. Control activities may be conducted only when all waterfowl (including light goose) and crane hunting seasons, excluding falconry, are closed.*

Proposed Season Dates: TBD

Daily Bag Limit: No Limit, no possession limit

Hunt Area: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; that portion of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line. The Special Sea Duck Zone is excluded from this hunt area.

Special Regulations during Light Goose Conservation Order Season:

(1) Participating hunters must possess a \$5 Snow Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season Permit while hunting light geese during this season; (2) Hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shotshells; (3) Hunters may use electronic calls with recordings of light geese; and (4) Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Note: Shooting hours for regular waterfowl seasons are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset except for (1) Resident Canada geese during September seasons when shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset, and (2) for light geese during the Light Goose Conservation Order Season when shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset. All season dates are inclusive. There is no possession limit for light geese; for all other waterfowl, the possession limit is three times the daily bag limit. In the Atlantic Flyway States of Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and North Carolina where Sunday hunting is prohibited statewide by State law, all Sundays are closed to all take of migratory waterfowl (including mergansers and coots).

WEBLESS MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS (Doves, Rails, Snipe and Woodcock)

MOURNING DOVE

Federal Framework: States may select a 90-day season between September 1 and January 31 with a 15-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into three segments.

Proposed Season Dates: Sept. 1, 2026 - Oct. 17, 2026
 Oct. 24, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026
 Dec. 19, 2026 - Jan. 9, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 15 per day

KING AND CLAPPER RAIL

Federal Framework: States may select a 70-day season between September 1 and the last Sunday in January with a 10-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.

Proposed Season Dates: Sept. 1, 2026 - Nov. 20, 2026

Daily Bag Limit: 10 per day (No more than 1 King Rail)

SORA AND VIRGINIA RAIL

Federal Framework: States may select a 70-day season between September 1 and the last Sunday in January with a 25-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.

Proposed Season Dates: Sept. 1, 2026 - Nov. 20, 2026

Daily Bag Limit: 25 per day

COMMON SNIPE

Federal Framework: States may select a 107-day season between September 1 and January 31 with an 8-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.

Proposed Season Dates: Sept. 26, 2026 - Jan 28, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 8 per day

WOODCOCK

Federal Framework: States may select a 45-day season between October 1 and January 31 with a 3-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.

Proposed Season Dates: Oct. 24, 2026 - Nov. 27, 2026
Jan. 11, 2027 - Jan. 27, 2027

Daily Bag Limit: 3 per day

For additional information on migratory game bird populations, regulations, where to hunt, and more go the [DNR Waterfowl Page](#).

**Summary of 2026 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
(as of March 17, 2026)**

Number/ Chapter (Cross File) Total: 34	Title	Primary Sponsor	Current Status	Original House Committee(s) and Hearing Dates	Opposite House Committee(s) and Hearing Dates
HB0091	Agriculture - Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Prohibitions	Delegate Healey	In the House - Hearing 2/04 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/04/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB0175 (SB0961)	Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation - Alterations	Delegate Ziegler	In the House - Hearing 1/20 at 1:00 p.m.	Ways and Means 1/20/2026 - 1:00 PM	Budget and Taxation
HB0186	Natural Resources - Bow Hunting - Sundays	Delegate Bouchat	In the House - Hearing 2/04 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/04/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB0197 (SB0118)	Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act	Delegate Mireku-North	In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.	Ways and Means 3/05/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB0420 (SB0242)	Modernizing Civil Relief for Service Members Act	Delegate Rogers	In the House - Reassigned to Government, Labor, and Elections and Health	Government, Labor, and Elections 2/17/2026 - 1:00 PM Health	
HB0447	Natural Resources - Right to Hunt, Fish, and Harvest Wildlife	Delegate Grammer	In the House - Hearing 3/16 at 12:00 p.m.	Rules and Executive Nominations 3/16/2026 - 12:00 PM	
HB0578 (SB0431)	Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species and Migratory Birds - Regulations, Lists, Petitions, Essential Habitats, and Takings	Delegate Palakovich Carr	In the House - Hearing 2/18 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/18/2026 - 1:00 PM	Education, Energy, and the Environment
HB0613 (SB0368)	Calvert and St. Mary's Counties - Living Shorelines and Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Measures	Delegate Morgan, T.	In the House - Hearing 2/25 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/25/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB0701 (SB0523)	Department of the Environment - Water Resources - Protection of Vernal Pools (Vernal Pool Wetlands Protection Act of 2026)	Delegate Hill	In the House - Hearing 2/18 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/18/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB0716 (SB0545)	Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors - Private Property Access - Prohibition	Delegate Pippy	In the House - Hearing 2/18 at 1:00 p.m.	Economic Matters 2/18/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB0780 (SB0918)	Wicomico County - Sunday Hunting Time Restrictions - Repeal	Wicomico County Delegation	In the House - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation	

**Summary of 2026 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
(as of March 17, 2026)**

				3/04/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB0949 (SB0613)	Agriculture – Noxious Weeds – Palmer Amaranth	Talbot County Delegation	In the House - Withdrawn by Sponsor	Environment and Transportation 2/27/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB1063 (SB0643)	Natural Resources - Hunting - Management	Delegate Boyce	In the House - Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/27/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB1067 (SB0181)	Hunting - Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition - Phase-Out	Delegate Guyton	In the House - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 3/04/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB1120 (SB0418)	Professional Licensing Portability - Members of the Foreign Service and Spouses	Delegate Rogers	In the House - Hearing 3/04 at 1:30 p.m. (Economic Matters)	Economic Matters 3/04/2026 - 1:30 PM Health	
HB1237	Pesticide Applications - Subscription Contract Requirements and Registry Establishment	Delegate Ruth	In the House - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 3/04/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB1324 (SB0879)	Baltimore City - Natural Resources - Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones	Delegate Rosenberg	In the House - Hearing 3/11 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 3/11/2026 - 1:00 PM	
HB1637	State Designations - State Amphibian - Long-Tailed Salamander	Delegate McComas	In the House - First Reading House Rules and Executive Nominations	Rules and Executive Nominations	
SB0118 (HB0197)	Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act	Senator Benson	In the Senate - Hearing 3/11 at 1:00 p.m.	Budget and Taxation 3/11/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0181 (HB1067)	Hunting - Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition - Phase-Out	Senator Lewis Young	In the Senate - Hearing 2/03 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/03/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0242 (HB0420)	Modernizing Civil Relief for Service Members Act	Senator Simonaire	In the Senate - Hearing 2/12 at 2:00 p.m. (Education, Energy, and the Environment)	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/12/2026 - 2:00 PM Finance	

**Summary of 2026 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
(as of March 17, 2026)**

SB0304	Collisions With Wild Animals - Prohibited Actions by Insurer	Senator Bailey	In the Senate - Hearing 2/04 at 1:00 p.m.	Finance 2/04/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0368 (HB0613)	Calvert and St. Mary's Counties - Living Shorelines and Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Measures	Senator Bailey	In the Senate - Hearing 2/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/10/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0418 (HB1120)	Professional Licensing Portability - Members of the Foreign Service and Spouses	Senator Simonaire	In the Senate - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m. (Education, Energy, and the Environment)	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/19/2026 - 1:00 PM Finance	Economic Matters Health
SB0431 (HB0578)	Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species and Migratory Birds - Regulations, Lists, Petitions, Essential Habitats, and Takings	Senator Brooks	In the Senate - Third Reading Passed (44-1)	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/17/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0523 (HB0701)	Department of the Environment - Water Resources - Protection of Vernal Pools (Vernal Pool Wetlands Protection Act of 2026)	Senator Washington, M.	In the Senate - Hearing 2/24 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/24/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0545 (HB0716)	Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors - Private Property Access - Prohibition	Senator Ready	In the Senate - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/19/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0588	Natural Resources - Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses - Alterations	Senator Simonaire	In the Senate - Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 3/10/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0613 (HB0949)	Agriculture - Noxious Weeds - Palmer Amaranth	Talbot County Senators	In the Senate - Withdrawn by Sponsor	Education, Energy, and the Environment 3/03/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0643 (HB1063)	Natural Resources - Hunting - Management	Senator Bailey	In the Senate - Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 3/10/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0754	Land Use - Preservation of Natural Resources	Senator Washington, M.	In the Senate - Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment	

**Summary of 2026 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
(as of March 17, 2026)**

				3/10/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0879 (HB1324)	Baltimore City - Natural Resources - Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones	Senator Attar	In the Senate - Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 3/10/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0918 (HB0780)	Wicomico County - Sunday Hunting Time Restrictions - Repeal	Senator Mautz	In the Senate - Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 3/10/2026 - 1:00 PM	
SB0961 (HB0175)	Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation - Alterations	Senator Salling	In the Senate - First Reading Senate Rules	Rules	

Outreach and Community Engagement Program



➤ **National Archery in the Schools Program**

- March 13 and 14 State Tournament in Westminster
- Over 500 kids registered for bullseye and 3D tournaments (Nearly 300 in 3D)
- Video footage taken to produce various videos

➤ **First Shot Mentored Turkey Hunt**

- Orientation: March 29
- Hunt Dates: April 25-26
- 10 pairs